

A CHINESE TRAVELLER DESCRIBES NEW YORK CITY

Kien Wen Ti Writes a Letter to His Brother in Peking About the Civilization of the Foreign Devils.

To my dear brother, Lord Liang Shen, if he is still existing in the shadow of the Dragon Throne at Peking, by the condescension of the Empress Dowager, these words, written from that city of foreign devils named New York, which hangs over the southwest corner of the world. May this writing find his head still upon his shoulders; if not, may his worthy burying place be auspicious and comfortable.

Since coming with the august representative of the Dragon Throne to this country, in which everything is done backward, I have seen sights so remarkable that they must appear true to you, for you will see that my poor powers of prevarication could never equal the tales I have to tell. If it was the object of our venerable parent—may whose income increase against the hour of his death—to send me to this land to learn strange things, he should die happy on hearing these words. Foreign-devil civilization being now the style in Peking, I have done my best, in my short sojourn here, to imbibe as much of it as possible. It comes, I find, in bottles which explode like fire-crackers, and leads to strange impressions. I have received many, which I inscribe here for your benefit.

You will know that while the representatives of the Dragon Throne proceeded to the city of Washington, where the Emperor with the Awe-Inspiring Teeth administers government, I stayed for a short time in New York at the invitation of a foreign devil gentleman of this city, who was once in Peking. The gods in heaven only know what wonders the rest of our people have seen in Washington, but as for me, in the language of this nation, New York will hold me for the present.

In the first place, and in regard to the religion of these folk, there is a great god of this city whose name is Business, and there are temples raised to him everywhere, to such a height that one might easily recite 120 proverbs of Confucius while dropping from the top of them to the bottom. To ascend to the top of them one enters a devil-ship with a thousand invisible wings, which leaps upward like the wind, so that the entrails of the unwary are left at the bottom of the shaft. In these buildings there are countless shrines to this god, which tick continually and emit ribbons of sacred writing all day, to the joy and sorrow of devotees. The main temple of the god is in a great building, full of noise. There the mandarins of the city go daily to fight each other and shout and tear up bits of paper. The god, which is invisible, sits above and, as his servants please him, takes the wealth of this one and gives it to that one.

The streets of this city are very wonderful, and there are, in truth, men paid to clean them, so that from their cleanliness they obtain a fearful and foreign look. For my part, a street without smells is like an egg without salt. There is no execution ground where one may pass an agreeable afternoon, but machines swooping here and there of their own accord. I judge that it is from the presence of these machines that the people get their great agility.

One may ride here in many manners—in yellow vehicles which rush about propelled by no horse or man, but by the breath of the invisible winds. Fire-breathing dragons also drag cars full of men and women about this city, on high bridges. These foreign devils are a hardy people, and while they are packed in these cars like river fish in a Yangtze junk, until one could not insert the edge of a fan between them, they reach their journey's end still living, I may say, in nine cases out of ten. It is no wonder that we were not able to persuade them of the futility of life at Peking at a time when the Empress Dowager has well forgotten.

The thunder of these fire-breathing dragons overhead, and the rattle of the divinely propelled vehicles, and the horse wagons on the ground, all striving to overturn one another and to defame each other's ancestors, is not all. The very bowels of the earth yawn open, and from them issue horrible vapors and noise. These people of New York are evidently not satisfied with leaving the next world to itself, but must raise sky-brushing towers to be as familiar with heaven as possible, and open the earth to inspect the upper crust of hell at their leisure.

With the appearance of these foreign devils you are familiar to a great extent, but we should remember that the gods have probably given them their faces and bodies for some purpose beyond the minds of men, and should not laugh. Tell young See Yup of Canton, who wagged me a dinner on the Fat Shan flower boats that the foreign devils of this country had blue and green hair on their faces, that I can already taste his collation of shark fins and birds' nest soup. While there is every other color of hair which may be woven in a mandarin's jacket, blue and green I have not seen, although I have watched diligently for it. The women of this land are marvelously made. They walk with the stride of a man, and as you know, wear men's skirts, while the men wear women's trousers. Their feet are larger even than the Manchuwomen's feet, and I understand that in their early youth their bodies are compressed so that their waists are barbarously like the necks of bottles. Why in this cruel process the immortal souls are not squeezed from

their bodies I have not the divine light to understand. In full costume they are an awesome and terrible sight, and on occasions when they meet in the evening to dance publicly with men or to the dine with them, they are attired in a manner which I shall not set to paper, but of which I shall inform you privately on my return. They have the brazen habit of looking one between the eyes, are allowed to gad about at will, and are acknowledged openly to command their husbands. Do not let this be read to the women of my house lest they get pernicious ideas which only the bamboo may eradicate.

The government of the people of this city has been explained to me again and again, and yet I have no ability to understand any save facts. The chief mandarin of the city is chosen because of his ability to eat many dinners and to promise things which he has no intention of doing. Here, at least, the manner of ruling will be familiar to you. But since the present chief mandarin has ruled not a head has been cut off! It is not because there are no enemies of his ruling, but it is the fashion here for one official to revile another in safety.

Under this chief mandarin are a body of lesser mandarins, each one set against the other, and boards of officials or no purpose that I can imagine. There is actually a mandarin to see that the streets are clean, and a mandarin to see that the city is healthy—as though these things were not better left in the hands of heaven—and a host of others holding positions of similar emptiness. The police of the city are giants, who are sometimes rewarded for their deeds by gifts of real estate, but are subject to banishment to wildernesses, inhabited only by wild goats at the pleasure of their officers. Gambling is unlawful, save in the name of the great god Business, and opium smoking is not permitted, cigarettes being the only form of unhealthy joy that a man may breathe into his nostrils and be within the pale.

As to the strange customs of these people, they are so many and marvelous that I may not dwell on them. No man may have more than one wife of his own wedding, but the more children he has the greater will be his glory before the Emperor with the Awe-Inspiring Teeth. From morning until night the men work for money in ten thousand ways, while their wives move at large devising means of spending it.

The evening is given up to amusements of every sort, some of which I shall describe to you in season. Whatever a man does during the day or night is printed on papers as numerous as tea leaves, and sent out that the city may read of it. Indeed, so magical is this printing of papers, that I believe that when you consider doing a thing in this country, and go about it, you may be likely to read about it before it is accomplished.

The evening is given up to amusements various as the mind of man can devise. Women and men gather together and dance, embracing one another before the world, to the tune of music that is like no civilized music in heaven, earth or hell. In the theatres of which there is one street completely full, great crowds assemble nightly to watch astonishing performances in which women appear upon the stage unashamed. Many men spend the evenings imbibing that foreign devil civilization of which I have spoken. The system of doing so is as intricate as the Japanese tea ceremony each man, I understand, being under the obligation of being treated, as they say, by every other man in turn, until the walls multiply and the rugs upon the floor float about so that one is forced to recline upon them to keep them in place. At least so I found. The next morning after this process of civilization one is ready for the grave, and yet a man may risk death for less pleasant hours.

These, then, are the tales of what I have learned, so far, in this strange country. Truly, I am like a voyager in another world, seeing things and people which the gods surely made when they had run out of reason. I pray that your head may endure against the words which your enemies whisper. Tell me the Empress Dowager. Tell me what you may see my return.

I am sending you a box of this foreign devil civilization in twenty-four bottles. When the bubbles of it tickle your honored nose, remember your brother in a far country.

KIEN WEN-TI.

PLAINT OF THE PLUTOCRAT.

I have bought everything I can buy;
I have tried everything I can try;
I have eaten each eatable,
Beaten each beatable;
I have eyed everything I can eye,
I have sold everything I can sell;
I have told everything I can tell;
I have seized all the seizeable,
Squeezed all the squeezeable,
Till they've shelled everything they can shell.

I have ridden each thing I can ride;
I have hidden everything I can hide;
I have joked all the jokeable,
Skaked all the skakeable;
I have slid everywhere I can slide.

I have walked everywhere I can walk;
I have talked everywhere I could talk;
I have kissed all the kissable,
Hissed all the hissable;
I have barked everything I can bark.

I have crushed every one I could crush;
I have hushed every one I could hush;
I have drunk every drinkable;
Thought every thinkable;
I have rushed everywhere I could rush.

I have been everything I can be,
And the scheme of things will not agree;

I have spent all that's spendable—
Still it's not endable,
And I mean it's a bother to me.

—Chicago Tribune.



ON THE BOOK TABLE.

The seventy or eighty letters written in 1870-71 by Bismarck to his wife during the Franco-Prussian War, and but lately brought to light in Berlin, are being translated into English. They will be published in the United States by D. Appleton & Co.

Captain Richmond Pearson Hobson is at work on "A History of the United States Navy." About one-quarter of the work is done, and a year will probably elapse before it is finished. Possibly, however, it will begin to appear ere long in serial form in some one of the magazines before its publication in book-form.

J. Aubrey Tyson, whose first story, "The Stirrup Cup," was published this spring, is writing a second novel, which will be published in the fall.

A new work by Hezekiah Butterworth, the central character of which will be Governor Jonathan Trumbull, of Connecticut, will be published soon. It will be called "Brother Jonathan."

The Macmillan Company has in preparation a biography of the late John Fiske. For certain reasons the name of the author is not yet available, but he is an intimate friend of the Fiske family, and much of the two volumes in text and illustrations will be compiled from documents and pictures left by the late historian.

Mrs. Burton Harrison has just finished a novelette which will soon be published. It is based on her play, called "The Unwelcome Mrs. Hatch," and will also bear this title.

"Mr. Chamberlain: His Life and Public Career," by S. H. Jeyes, is in press.

Robert W. Chambers intends to cover the period of the American Revolution more fully than he has yet done in his two historical novels, "Cardigan" and "The Maid-at-Arms." His plan is ultimately to complete four novels, each separate as to story, but together completely covering the Revolutionary period. When he will finish the other two is uncertain, as his next book, upon which he is now engaged, will treat of contemporary New York city life.

"Margaret Fuller's Love Letters," with an introduction by Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, will be brought out in book form this week. They were written in 1845-46, and were addressed to James Nathan, a young business man of New York. Reminiscences of Margaret Fuller, written by Emerson, Horace Greeley, and Charles T. Congdon will also be included in the volume.

A new book by the author of "Elizabeth and Her German Garden" will be published in the fall. It is entitled "A Journey Round Rugen."

A new volume by Charles Battell Loomis will include the author's stories of "Americans Abroad," which appeared in the Century, and a number of other tales, among the "A Man of Putty," "The Men Who Swapped Languages," "When the Automobile Ran Down," and "Veritable Quiddors."

A large number of biographical papers by Grant Duff, which have appeared from time to time in English periodicals, will be contained in two volumes, to be published shortly under the title "Out of the Past." Some of the papers are "Chesterfield as an Educator," "Walter Raguehot," "Dean Stanley," "Matthew Arnold," "The Empress Frederick," and "The Duke of Argyll."

Clara Morris, who is nearly convalescent from her recent severe illness, has finished two-thirds of a novel with the striking title, "Hulda's Brat." This will probably be completed in a few months, and then she will put the finishing touches on her second volume of theatrical reminiscences, "Life on the Stage."

Many who have read the announcement of Maurice Hewitt's new novel doubtless have wondered what its title—"The Queen's Quair"—means. In a prologue the author explains that a quair is a cashier, a quire, a little book. In one such a certain king wrote fairly the tale of his love business; and here, in this other, I pretend to show you all the tragic error, all the pain, known only to her that moved it, of that child of his children's children, Mary of Scotland.

NEW YORK'S AQUARIUM

A special bulletin of the Zoological Society of New York says that the Aquarium Building is to be improved in various ways. As the result of a visit to Europe last summer, the Director candidly admits that the ideal aquarium building may not yet have been designed; but he is "inclined to the opinion that a circular building, with an exhibition hall, like that of the New York Aquarium, is more satisfactory than one whose collections are arranged along narrow corridors, like those of European institutions." Its exhibition hall is more spacious, and although its exhibition tanks are smaller, and not so attractively installed, as in most European aquariums, they contain a larger collection of fishes. Just as it is, the New York Aquarium is one of the most attractive institutions in the country, the proof appearing in the fact that it attracts an attendance of about 5,000 persons daily. It will be still more attractive, however, when it is better lighted. Indeed the lighting is so insufficient that it has been found impossible to maintain water plants in the exhibition tanks. The plans adopted to remedy this defect provide for fully three times as much light as is now admitted. This improvement will permit the introduction of both fresh and salt water plants, and will make it possible to remove the white tiles with which the tanks are lined and to replace them with rock-work like that which makes the Aquarium at Naples so remarkably attractive.

Quite as important as the additional light will be a better water supply. The brackish water which is now in use is a poor substitute for pure sea water. With a system of "closed circulation"—by means of stored sea water—clear water and a constant temperature will be secured, and the change will not only admit of the introduction of species which cannot now be kept, but will greatly diminish the expense of maintenance. It is startling to learn that even the Croton water which is now used in the Aquarium to supply the fresh water tanks is so murky, at times as to be unfit for its purpose, and will require the installation of a permanent stored supply of pure and clear fresh water.

Another interesting feature of the Aquarium which has been an object of great interest to visitors is its fish hatchery, with a capacity of about 2,000,000 of fish eggs at one time. Three hundred thousand fish have been successfully hatched out and planted in the waters of the State. Through the co-operation of the United States Fish Commission, and the New York State Fish Commission, the hatchery is operated without expense to the Aquarium; and we agree with the opinion expressed in the bulletin that "there is no reason why the Aquarium hatchery should not be a local school for fish culture." This is a truly modern science, but there are few who know the progress that has already been made in its development. It is pleasant to know that our country leads in this department of progress, planting more than nine hundred millions of young fish in streams and rivers of the country every year. This important work is ably seconded by Fish Commissions appointed by many of the individual States, and it is to be hoped that the Aquarium hatchery may ultimately become a valuable school in pisciculture.—Our Dumb Friends.

MYSTERY OF WILD ANIMALS.

"The forest has many mysteries," said an old Pennsylvania woodman, "but none deeper than that of wild animals that die natural deaths."

"The four-footed dwellers of the woods certainly do not live forever. Age and disease must carry them off regularly, as human beings are carried off, but what becomes of their bodies?"

"I never heard of anyone coming across a wild bear or deer or wildcat or fox that had died from natural causes. I found the carcasses of a big five-pronged buck in the woods once, but a rattlesnake, also dead, had buried its fangs in one of the deer's nostrils. There had evidently been a fight to the death between the reptile and the beast."

"Another time I followed the trail of a bear from a clearing where it had

stolen a half-grown lamb. I came upon the headless body of the lamb a mile or so out on the trail, and half a mile further on, near the edge of a swamp, I was surprised to find the body of the bear."

"Its jaws were open and its glassy eyes were pushed far out of its head. I held a post-mortem examination of the dead bear and found the lamb's head lodged in its throat. How or why the bear ever permitted it to get there I am unable to explain."

"I have many times found other dead animals in the woods, but never one that did not show unquestionable evidence of having died from violence of some kind. Every woodsman will tell you the same. What becomes of the dead wild animals that die natural deaths?"—New York Sun.

ANCIENT ROMAN STRUCTURE USED AS ENGLISH BARN

Fifty Years Before America Was Discovered It Was More Than a Thousand Years Old. Still Standing in Essex.

Judging by the past records, not one American tourist in ten thousand of those who are now beginning to crowd into London for what promises to be an unprecedented American season will see a relic that is one of the most interesting things in England, from an antiquarian point at least.

In Essex, scarce two miles back from the North Sea, stands a small stone structure now used as a barn. Any one can enter and chip off to his heart's content the dull red bricks that appear in the stone work. Only a few persons in the neighborhood know or care anything about the building beyond the local tradition that gold cups and vases, and piles of ancient coin have been dug up from the neighboring ground, and that somewhere in its vicinity a priceless golden calf is buried.

The bricks that the stray visitor is at liberty to carry off in his pocket date back almost to the time of Christ. It was only a few years ago that the queer earthworks surrounding the ancient building were identified as those of the fortifications of Othona, mentioned in the military survey of the Roman empire.

From the remains of accoutrements dug up in the course of building a sea-wall lately it was proved that the "castrum"—as the Romans called the five acres inclosed in the fortifications—had been manned by a band of the Fortenses. Many coins have been dug out and from these we learn that the castrum proper was probably built about A. D. 289 and occupied by the Fortenses about 120 years.

The structure now standing partly in and partly out of the castrum was built by the Saxon missionary, Bishop Cedd, out of the materials of the castrum walls, and was one of the first Christian churches in England. The main body is the only part now standing. Fifty years before America was discovered, the church, then more than a thousand years old had a chancel, nave and small tower, with two bells. Fire wrought havoc in it later, and in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, James I, Charles I and Charles II, the chapel became a beacon or lighthouse. From a beacon the chapel was degraded to a common barn, and thus it stands today.—London Letter.

THEATRICAL NOTES.

A musician named Steindel, who lives at Stuttgart, recently gave two concerts there which astonished the natives. He himself played the viola; one of his sons, aged twelve, played the piano; while the 'cello and violin were in the hands of two other sons of his, aged nine and eight, respectively. The four are said to have played the most difficult chamber music without a flaw, and to the delight of the critics and the audiences, which included all the prominent musicians in the city.

The dramatization of the late Frank Norris' "The Pit" will be in four acts, of which the first will be laid in the lobby of the Auditorium at Chicago during the performance of a grand opera. There will be 200 people on the stage. Act two will be the rehearsal of amateur theatricals at the home of the Cresslers. Act three will disclose an art gallery in the home of Jadwin. Act four will have two scenes, first the office of Gretry, Converse & Co., brokers, and the second the "pit," with 500 people on the stage. An English dramatization of the play has already been attempted, and the publishers of the book have gone into the courts to restrain the Imperial Theatre in London from producing it.

Olga Nethersole is on the warpath because, after only ten performances, Beerbohn Tree withdrew Claude Lowther's new play, "The Gordian Knot" from Her Majesty's Theatre, London, and substituted "Trilby." It seems that the only person who won any distinction from "The Gordian Knot" was Miss Nethersole, who, as the adventurous heroine of the play, was generally admitted to have scored a remarkable success. Miss Nethersole was specially engaged for this production by Mr. Tree at an enormous salary, as in order to accept it she was obliged to break up her own company, on tour in the provinces, and cancel all her engagements. Her part so far outshone Mr. Tree's, however, that he did not like it, and a beautiful row between the actor-manager and the actress was the result, when he suddenly determined to abandon the play. Miss Nethersole declares that Mr. Tree knows absolute nothing about stage management, and she will never play with him again as long as she lives. So there!

WE ARE NOT MUSIC LOVERS.

"I seriously doubt whether America will ever become a great music loving country," said a well known local musician, "for musical events here are not well patronized, except those of which some celebrated artist is the feature, which leads me to doubt whether the public goes to hear music so much as to see and hear a great musician. Now, this may come from an over refined taste, which prevents enjoyment of anything but the very best, which is noticeable in the fact that in social life, while he or she who merely sings or plays is tolerated and listened to patronizingly, there seems to be no real enjoyment of the effort made. The German is the genuine music lover who enjoys music fairly rendered, and though no one appreciates more greatly the great artist, he does not demand greatness or nothing. But in his own country, and measurably here in his saengerbunds, he listens to his music under conditions which permit him to enjoy creature comforts at the same time. He takes his frau and kinder to the music hall or beer garden, where seated around a table, they sip their beer, eat German lunches, and pater familias puffs his pipe, drinking in the strains of music at the same time, each form of enjoyment the complement of the others. Of course, this is not possible among what we customarily call our better class, which is not in the habit of eating and drinking in public. An incident, bearing out partially my theory that it is the great musician and not the great music which is demanded, occurred when Kubelik was here a year or two ago. On my way to his concert I met a friend who affects musical tastes, but as a business man does not keep in touch with musical events, he had overlooked the rather modest announcement of Kubelik's concert."

"Come with me," said I; "I'm going to hear some good music."
"Where?" he asked.
"At the Columbia," I replied.
"Who?"
"Oh, a young violinist," said I, and seeing that he was not aware of Kubelik's arrival, I concluded not to enlighten him, but to get his unbiased judgment."

"A little persuasion succeeded, and we were soon seated and listening to the young artist's marvelous music. I had purposely neglected to get a program, and, remarking my apparent forgetfulness, said I knew the numbers, anyway. My friend listened patiently, not, perhaps, enjoying it so much himself, as sympathizing with my enthusiasm, and after it was over and as we walked down the street, he said:

"He's a pretty fair fiddler—not an artist, but a good fiddler—scarcely interesting one who has heard Ole Bull. Viuleuxemps, Wilhelm, Remenyi and Isaye. I suppose you know him and feel interested in him, and he does play well for a boy, but he does not measure up. Now when Kubelik comes—"

"That was Kubelik," said I.—Washington Post.

THE BORE OF BOWING.

"I am tired of this fashion of bowing to everyone that you have ever met," said the girl who had just returned from a long walk. "It's a nuisance and a farce. It means nothing and becomes fearfully monotonous. Bowing to your friends is all right, but constantly jerking your head to the slightest acquaintance is very tiring. Take for instance the acquaintances with whom you have not exchanged a word since your primary school days. You know it would be snobbish and hateful not to give the nod of recognition when you meet them; but as they have not the glimmer of an interest in you and you haven't an atom of an interest in them, it seems farcical to give the expected nod."

"Then there is the acquaintance whom you have met once, and with whom your conversation has been limited to the conventional words at introduction, 'Glad to meet you.' You must go on bobbing at him through a lifetime if you live in the same town with him. He wishes you would stop bowing and you wish you could. You dare not cease the performances for fear he will think you a snob, and he, of course, can do nothing but return your salute."

"To a certain type of woman, however, I suppose there is a certain delight in bowing. It is like a game to her. She takes as much pleasure in it as she does in an extensive wardrobe. She has a haughty bow for the 'fresh' man and the minute afterward she is bending her neck graciously, all smiles and cordiality, for one of the 'fine fellows.' When she meets a person who has been employed by her some time in some capacity, she bows very patronizingly and says very distinctly and benevolently, 'How do you do, James?' or 'Good morning, Maria.' When it is some woman friend with whom she is very chummy, she gives a quick little jerk of her head and laughs right out in her greeting. If it is a man that she knows only slightly, but hopes to know much better, there is a demureness in her bow and a sidelong glance to accompany it. If she meets someone she considers above her in the social scale, she bows slowly, looking directly into the person's eyes. If it is a woman she hates, she moves her head ever so slightly, just the mere shadow of a nod, which is infinitely worse than no bow at all. When she meets the man she likes best—well, just ask him how she bows then."

"So maybe the fashion of bowing is worth while after all, for if it is a bore to nod to bare acquaintances, it is a joy to make an art of bowing."—New York Times.

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